27th February 2018

**Special Landscape Focus Group Status Report on Phase 1.Fact Finding For Neighbourhood Plan.**

The Special Landscape Group has met 3 or 4 times since inception and has as members Peter Wrigley, Mick Phipps, Katie Burke, Geoff Waterworth and Philip Thompson (FG Leader).

With valuable support and guidance from Jackie Wootton. We set off to research our topics under the banner of the Special Landscape Focus Group. We recognise the value of the Parish landscape and the needs to protect and enhance/maintain this asset. This needs recognition whether the currently planned threats to the area materialise or not. Given the position of Pannal other threats to the landscape will emerge in the future.

1. Pannal and Burn Bridge Parish is set in some lovely countryside already designated as Green Belt and Special Landscape Area for good reason..

The ‘Parish contains heritage assets which Mick worked to collect details on.

**Heritage Assets and Planning-Mick**

Mick will provide detailed identification of all heritage assets, listed buildings and the conservation area within the Parish. Then outline their current status and what protection they enjoy.

Rules and regulations against development impacting on, Listed Buildings in Pannal and their descriptions. Conservation Areas, Non Heritage Assets, Plans and Maps to show locations. He will suggest how they might become more widely acknowledged, understood and cherished, especially by the local community – for example; how many people are aware the viaduct is a grade II\* listed building probably designed by George Stephenson. Mick will suggest ways in which this might be achieved such as improving access, enhancing settings and providing on site information boards leaflets etc.

1. The value of the long cherished Parish itself together with its setting within the wider Crimple Valley has been Peter’s topic

PETERS WORK

Neighbourhood Plan

Pannal people are proud of their village and do not see it as part of Harrogate. They wish to defend its identity and heritage.

There was probably a Neolithic settlement in the Crimple Valley on the south slope of Almsford Bank. In 2009(?) an axe head from that period was found above the left bank of the river Crimple.

Pannal is mentioned in the Domesday Book as part of the manor of Rossett. A wooden church dedicated to St Michael and All Angels was sacked by the Scots and replaced with a stone one in the 14th century in the name of the local St Robert of Knaresborough

In 1894 a large part of the Parish of Pannal was taken under the control of Harrogate. The Parish Council was merged with the Borough of Harrogate in 1937. In 2016 the Pannal and Burn Bridge Parish Council was re-established by the wish of the people.

The Crimple Valley Special Landscape Area(SLA) was written into the Harrogate District Local Plan in 2001 (Policy C9). Justification (3.34) for this and the other areas states “their long-term protection is considered to be essential for the maintenance of the special character of these settlements”

This designation of SLA of this area has been confirmed in further reviews in 2004 and again more recently.

**Landscape Character**

The Middle Crimple Valley, area 58, was assessed in February 2004. In its opening paragraph the report on Harrogate District Landscape Character Assessment states “Crimple Valley is important to the setting of Harrogate and provides an essential green "rural corridor" separating Harrogate from the village of Pannal and others. It is highly valued by local residents. This area plays an important role in separating Harrogate and Pannal and is sensitive to development which would result in coalescence. The capacity of this area to accept change which would *not* result in coalescence is limited “(italics are in the text) .It is here referring to an area including PN14 and PN16.

Policy C2 as altered in 2004, requires that development protect existing landscape character. This was reinforced by Policy C9 which lists the Special Landscape Areas. The review in 2008 remarked that” these areas (58 and its adjacent area 61) provide land of exceptionally high landscape quality. This area plays an important role in separating Harrogate and Pannal and is sensitive to development which would result in coalescence They contribute distinctively to the landscape of the town.”

Draft policy NE4 says that the designation Special Landscape Area reinforces the importance of these landscapes. Development proposals are required to meet the criteria:-

I Avoid loss of key characteristics that contribute to the quality of the SLA and the setting of Harrogate

J Ensure that development proposals are linked to the settlements and are designed to enhance the appearance of the urban edge and its integration with the countryside

The link between the Landscape Character Assessment and the DLP was provided by Table 2.69 of the Sustainability Appraisal 2016 which included the following implications-

-Assessment of ….individual site options need to identify impacts on landscape quality and avoid adverse impacts

- A light touch review to consider whether the character areas and guidance are sufficiently defined and appropriate in terms of.....local policy drivers

Draft Policy NE5C Green Infrastructure states that “ Development proposals should:

- Avoid creating undifferentiated built-up areas within its overall boundaries and to prevent built-form coalescence;

- Safeguard the character of urban areas as manifest in the system of open spaces which link town and countryside “

We submit that the criteria set out in the previous paragraphs have not been met, in letter or in spirit, by Sites PN14 and PN16. It is our opinion that the development envisaged would-

-conflict with Policy NE4 by removing the heart of the Crimple Valley as a SLA

- cause a loss of the key characteristics described in the Landscape Character Assessment of 2004 “Gently undulating valley sides comprising rectilinear fields of improved grassland typical of parliamentary enclosure bound by an eclectic mix of hedges, walls and fences with individual trees”

- `not enhance the appearance of the urban edge by introducing urban sprawl and coalescence.

Trees and Woodlands Draft Policy NE7

The area of the Crimple Valley covered by PN14 and PN16 is part of the land which was Knaresborough Forest .There are still trees about within these areas which must date from the time when the woodland was more widespread.

The river Crimple runs through these areas PN14 and PN16.In these areas it is a Flood Zone 3, as set out in the National Policy Guidance, and shown on the Environment Agency’s map for the river.

1. Geoff’s Work.

Biodiversity and wildlife a collection of some useful data on species etc.

**Overview of biodiversity, priority habitats and ecological networks**

**Suitability regarding flooding and drainage**

Pannal and surrounding areas are already a designated flood plain and more houses would impact on the already poor drainage. In Dec 2016 there were floods in the central part of Pannal adjacent to Crimple Beck. HDC Landscape Character Assessment (Feb 2004) highlights mid crimple valley as ‘slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged’. There are various springs in the area of PN19 in addition to the marked drainage ways. This results in many boggy areas and water pools that exist most of the year and are particularly bad in the winter. (John Wootton has detailed information on springs, wells, aquafers and boreholes in the area. He has reviewed and analysed the data on Crimple Valley hydrology and has some relevant observations on the consequences of increased leakage and land use.)

**Wildlife and biodiversity**

The proposed development would have a negative impact on local wildlife and biodiversity including foxes, badgers, rabbits, deer, heron, owls, buzzards, kingfishers, red kites, and trout. There are a good number of hedges providing support areas for birds and a number of established trees of both oak and ash. It is likely that all of these would go in the development. There are also a wide range of wild flowers including orchids.

**Effect on health and quality of life**

The Natural Environment white paper states that ‘they are committed to enhancing green infrastructure, and thus improving the health and quality of life of communities’. Friends of the Earth are ‘committed to maintaining green spaces so that people can enjoy relative peace in natural and restorative surroundings. The community should look after green spaces’. They give us places where we can walk, run, play, explore and meet. Quality green spaces are important for the wellbeing of all residents across our towns. The area of PN19 is precisely one of these green areas much used by local residents and also by offcomers. As such it needs careful preservation and nurturing.

**An area of special beauty**

The site is part of a SLA (HD Landscape Character Assessment Feb 2004) and highlights crimple valley as being an essential rural corridor separating Harrogate from Pannal. Crimple valley forms a picturesque backdrop and approach to Harrogate for both businesses and tourists entering the area. The view as one approaches from the south looking to the viaduct is an iconic and enduring image. The village has a character and charm which would not be retained if Pannal becomes joined to Harrogate by this proposed crimple valley development but will become part of a conurbation. Pannal church is a 13th century grade II listed building making Pannal a village with old and historic ties which should be cherished. The view looking across crimple valley from the pathway joining Stone Rings Lane and All Saints Court is one of considerable beauty and would be destroyed for good by the proposed development of PN18 and PN19. Many peoples lives would be diminished if it were allowed to take place.

*However after a meeting with a representative of the Environment Focus Group. It was recognised that similar work has also been undertaken by the Environment Focus Group, perhaps in a manner that is better suited to challenging inappropriate change of land use. Therefore to save time this element is not fully reported but will be embraced by the evolving ecological recording methodology the Environment Focus Group are developing.*

1. Katie’s Work

By way of contrast to the collection of date from records, files and historic data, Katie has set about gathering the opinion of the wider population of the Parish etc. by way of a survey.

But this survey has no need for canvassers with clipboards, this survey embraces new technology and is an online **surveymonkey.**

Jackie has been able to offer advice regarding survey techniques etc.

The survey is designed in a popular way that will appeal to all. Particularly it is hoped to obtain the opinions of the younger generations of Pannal and Burn Bridge residents. Those who may live with the local landscape for the most years to come.

**Our village's Special Landscape Area - under threat from PN17, 18, 19 & 20 of HBC's Local Plan**

**The Special Landscape Area which separates Pannal from Harrogate is yet again under serious threat of becoming Harrogate's latest housing estate.**

**HBC's Local plan wants to replace PN17 (Spring Lane) with houses & PN19 & 20 (the fields behind the church and school up to Leeds Road) with hundreds of houses and an expanded school. Also PN18 (the fields next to Mercedes garage up to the viaduct) with a huge Industrial & retail development park.**

**What are our community's thoughts on our Special Landscape Area?  How do we use the space?**

Top of Form

**\* 1. Do you support the preservation of the Special Landscape Area surrounding Pannal and Burn Bridge? w 0**

Yes

No

No preference either way

OK

**\* 2. What do you see as the main benefits of our Special Landscape Area? (tick as many options as you want) w 0**

Green space separating Pannal and Burnbridge to Harrogate town

A scenic gateway to Harrogate

Open and beautiful space for recreation

Providing a natural habitat for a wide range of wildlife

Preserving ancient trees, shrubs and woodland

Providing green infrastructure for flood resilience through natural absorption of rainwater and run off

None

Other (please specify) 

OK

**\* 3. If you use our Special Landscape Area for recreation, please tick what you use the space for (tick as many as you want) w 0**

Walking/walking groups

Walking with your family

Running/jogging

Cycling

Exercising dog/s

Observing local wildlife

Observing local flora

Other (please specify) 

OK

**\* 4. How often, on average, do you use our Special Landscape area (select one option) w 0**

More than once a day

Every day

More than once a week

Every week

At least once a month

At least once a year

Never

OK

**\* 5. Where do you live? w 0**

Pannal

Burnbridge

Walton Park

Outside of the Parish... please specify 

Bottom of Form

1. **Philip’s Work**

**Woodlands, Public Paths and Green Infrastructure Fact Finding.**

1. The Landscape around the Parish is important to the local community, wildlife and the setting of the nearby, but separate Spa town of Harrogate.
2. This ‘special’ value of the surrounding is recognised by Town Planners and other writers including the professionals who compiled a series of Landscape Character Assessments, Numbers 57, 58 & 60. These documents were approved by Harrogate Borough Council in 2004 and place significant value on the local Special Landscape Areas and West Yorkshire Green Belt.
3. Pannal and Burn Bridge Parish is located astride a major road and rail gateway into Harrogate, famous for its protected heritage and award winning parks and floral displays.
4. The Parish benefits from its setting within a rural valley. It is surrounded by attractive countryside which includes Armscliff Crag SSSI, Crimple Valley Viaduct Grade 2\* and woodlands such as The Warren and Spacey Houses Whin.
5. The network of Public Rights of Way give access to some of the farmed and wooded landscape around the village. But it needs to be recognised that the wet clay soils mean that some paths are difficult to use for much of the year. Increased road traffic levels makes some pavements and roads difficult to walk along in a safe and enjoyable manner. Some targeted maintenance and improvements plus limited new linking path provision could greatly improve accessibility to the local ‘Special’ landscape.
6. Hedgerows with trees form a vital part of the local Green Infrastructure, they important for wildlife and for peoples enjoyment of the landscape. The health and continuity of those hedgerows are suffering from current land management practices, and some land holdings are gradually losing their hedgerow trees by default. Natural replacement trees are not able to flourish so making the future landscape impoverished.
7. Woodlands tend to be fragmented, but with some interventions, connectivity could be improved to benefit both landscape and wildlife. This would help mitigate some aspects of climate change.
8. Water flows though the Parish along the Crimple Beck and tributaries including Clark Beck, Stone Rings Beck and Horn Beck. These becks naturally overflow resulting in wet flood plains etc. The streams banks are well covered with mature trees, enhancing this valuable wildlife habitat. Much of the Crimple Beck is accessible to the public from one bank.
9. Landscape Sites Include;

**Sandy Banks;** Site of Interest for Nature, (SINC). A wooded former quarry off Church Lane, owned by Harrogate Borough Council.

**Springhill Farm or Low Wood** SINC on western boundary of Parish. No public path access

**Allen Wood;** off Malthouse Lane Amenity Open Space owned by Harrogate Borough Council. Runs between housing areas in Burn Bridge and Pannal.

**Almsford Bank Wood**, additional planting in recent years, wet poorly drained land. Owned by Harrogate Borough Council.

**Crimple Meadows Playing Fields** Owned by Harrogate Borough Council, contains pitches and formal playground. Within designated Pannal Conservation Area.

**Pannal Village Green** at junction of Pannal Green and Main Street. Level site with circa. 1960’s landscaping, enhanced by mature tree setting Christmas Lights and the nearby C of E Church. Within the conservation area. HBC.

**Long Acre Park**. Playground and small kick about area grassland and tree planting beside A61. Access from Long Acre Way. HBC.

New Tree Planatation Located near Princess Royal Way Roundabout and Thirkill Drive (to former Dunlopillow site). Sadly Horse Chestnut Tree Avenue entrance feature now fragmented.

**Pannal Sports Junior Football Club Ground** Leeds Road. Sports pitch creation planned, final fundraising in progress. Site leased from HBC.

**Black Wood** Access off Dury Lane, linear remnant woodland site between golf course and Bypass. Assumed to belong to NYCC.

**Pannal Golf Course** Large wooded and manicured site on a prominent site off Follifoot Road. Assumed to be owned by the club. Public paths run outside the course.

**Spacey Houses Whin**. (Part). Mature coniferous woodland plantation with definitive paths off Follifoot Road. Assumed to be owned by Rudding Park Estate.

**Pannal Station Gardens** Provide welcome colour through a voluntary partnership.

**Harrogate Ringway Footpath** About 2.5 miles or 12% of the entire route lies within P&BB. Route promoted by Visit Harrogate and other ‘healthy’ walking organisations.

1. No Local Nature Reserves, Country Parks, Common Land or Registered Village Greens appear to exist in the Parish. No Cycle routes which avoid mud, busy traffic and steep hills link the Parish to local destinations.

No sites in the Parish appear to be designated as **Local Green Space.**

N.B. Since the 1950’s Harrogate Borough Council hasretained a large amount of land within the parish.

**Request for Survey resources**

The FG requests that the Steering Group gives consideration to commissioning a Biodiversity and Landscape Design Survey, to determine preferred works to maintain and enhance the Parish Landscape. This would add weight to any longer term Countryside Management proposal. Cost unknown.

If required, Green Infrastructure/Countryside Management planning could be initiated to explore possible ways to designate and physically improve the local landscape. Through partnership working it is possible to ensure the Parish has a more robust landscape for generations to come.

Partners could include Landowners, Tenants, representatives of the Parish, District and County Councils. Other organisations that may be able to assist include Northern/White Rose Forest, Woodland Trust, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Natural England, Forestry Commission and local Volunteers!

I have a concern that any improved remnant of the Parish landscape may be seen to be compensation for loss of high quality land to urban development in a sensitive Special Landscape Area. Timing may be important.

**Need for future Meetings**

The Landscape Focus Group is happy to continue meeting through March, and beyond if so required.